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BI-CENTENARY
OF THE BIRTH OF
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
PARIS, 1906

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For my dear friend
James Marion Hart
With the sincerest regards of
Alfred W. Smyth.

January 1907

1834

~~1834~~



CEREMONY HELD IN PARIS

TO COMMEMORATE THE

Bi-Centenary of the Birth

OF

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

April 27, 1906

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FRANKLIN FÊTE

IN PARIS

IT would be an ungracious as well as an idle task to preface the eloquent addresses delivered at the Franklin Fête, in Paris, by additional eulogies of the man who, of all others in the generation of Revolutionary giants, was distinguished in the many-sided *rôles* of Patriot, Diplomat, Philosopher, Man of Science and Author. His life work is more fittingly spread upon the record in the glowing words of the Americans who represented his native land, and of the Frenchmen who stood for the nation and city to

which he was accredited. The editor confines himself to knitting together, for those who were not present, and in as few words as possible, the fabric of their dignified encomiums, the truth and appropriateness which lent such value to the Ceremonial.

Not alone in America has the memory of Benjamin Franklin been affectionately conserved. There is no foreigner, dead more than a century, whose mention in France is hailed with as marked distinction as his. As in the United States his name is a household word, so in France no one's likeness is more quickly recognized. Yet prominent as he was on two continents, he is perhaps nearest to us in his humbler sphere. No man in America, perhaps none in Greater Britain, has ever given the world so much handy philosophy clad in such homely wit as he. After a fashion Poor Richard's Almanac is more noteworthy than Franklin's Diplomatic Correspondence. We glorify his keen intellect, his lofty character, his immense accomplishment ; we love

his glowing human nature. There is something of Æsop about him ; there have been many great statesmen, many great patriots and diplomats, few teachers of mankind ; and it rarely falls to the lot of man to stand before kings while keeping touch upon the pulse of the commons. Nor was his wisdom alone conveyed in the words of Poor Richard. The Paris *beau monde* was not only fascinated by his individuality of dress and deportment, and refreshed by his originality in putting things, but it was charmed by his quaint sayings, which struck the key-note of French humor ; and many of his *bons mots* survive. When he attended the first ascension of Montgolfier's balloon, some one said to him : " But of what use is it ? " " Of what *use* is a new-born baby ? " answered the Sage. His wit was not that of the mere jester—it had always a basis of wisdom. No American was ever so little and so much like a Frenchman. And be it noted that in each one of Franklin's characters he was as markedly successful as in the others.

That Franklin's wide and fair repute is a matter of national pride was shown when some years ago a movement was opened in America to erect his statue in Paris. The effort had not the result hoped for ; but one of the gentlemen interested in the movement garnered the idea. This was Mr. John Henry Harjes.

Born in Bremen, Mr. Harjes went to Philadelphia at the age of nineteen, grew up to friendship with its distinguished citizens, George W. Childs and Anthony Drexel, and nearly forty years ago came to Paris to establish a branch of the latter's banking house, thus earning an interest both in the city that Franklin adopted as his own, and in the great capital to which the Sage grew so attached, and which showered upon him so many courtesies. That Mr. Harjes has not been forgetful of the city that opened its gates to him as a youth, as well as sheltered the homeless Benjamin Franklin, is testified by many good deeds which few people know, and by a number of public gifts—as in the fine

statue of his late partner, Mr. Drexel, which adorns Fairmount Park. With a taste for municipal adornment, among his other benefactions, a few years ago he presented to his native city two superb statues of German Ritter, which had attracted much attention here at the Exposition of 1900, and now stand at the entrance of the Bremen Rathaus; and to these he later added two statues of Landsknechte, which adorn another of its portals.

It is not generally known that the placing of the statue of Washington in the centre of the Place d'Iéna, a site equalled by that of scarcely another monument in Paris, was almost entirely due to Mr. Harjes' efforts, who for several years devoted patient endeavor to gaining a dignified position for the memorial of him whom the world delighteth to honor.

Treasuring the idea of erecting a statue of Franklin in the capital where he had done such eminent international work, Mr. Harjes made quiet arrangements for a replica of Boyle's successful statue which stands in front of the Philadelphia Post

Office; but he wisely refrained from any public action until the 200th anniversary of Franklin's birth.

It was not alone Mr. Harjes who was to shed lustre on this day in Paris. Ever since his arrival on the scene of his new duties, His Excellency Robert S. McCormick, the American Ambassador, as a tribute to the unusual dignity and worth of the first incumbent of the high office he now holds, had purposed an elaborate celebration of the same anniversary; and aware of the steps Mr. Harjes had taken, he seized the occasion as peculiarly fitting for an international commemoration of the amity between France and the United States, which from the day when la Grande Nation stretched forth her mighty hand to aid the struggling colonies, has remained fresh and unbroken until to-day, when the younger nation has grown big and lusty, and the two stand before the world as representatives of the republican aspirations of America and Europe.

During the past few months these two

gentlemen have heartily co-operated to make the movement successful, and the national and city authorities of France and Paris have shown singular good-will in aiding the celebration. The city allotted and decorated a beautiful site for the statue at the entrance into the Place du Trocadéro of the Rue Franklin, on which the distinguished man long dwelt. Two ex-presidents of the French Republic and one of the United States, many diplomats of world-wide fame, and distinguished officials of every grade lent their names as a Committee of Honor to add brilliancy to the Fête; the United States selected as orator one of the representative teachers of Philadelphia and the best known student of the life of Franklin; the French Government chose a celebrated statesman to make an address; and the City of Paris and the Prefecture of the Seine did the like.

The Press was generously loyal to Franklin's memory, and published many appreciative notices of the coming celebration, as well as full reports of the occur-

rence; and Mr. McCormick appointed a Committee of Organization to aid him in perfecting the details, and a General Committee, under the dignified Presidency of the American Consul-General, to represent the American Colony of Paris.

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Son Excellence Mr. ROBERT S. McCORMICK,
Ambassadeur des États-Unis.

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It would be invidious, among all the earnest workers who stood beside the Ambassador, and, inspired by his unflagging zeal, upheld his hands in his arduous task, to select any name for special prominence; but the thanks of the public are peculiarly due to Mr. Dalliba, President of the Committee of Organization, who pulled the laboring oar during the many months of preparation, and to whom his colleagues are

beholden for the never-failing good-will and adroitness with which he overcame unwonted difficulties ; to Mr. Benét, the Vice-President, who, as his chief collaborator in the arrangements, gave freely of his experience, fine judgment and deftness ; to Colonel Bailly-Blanchard, Vice-Président d'Honneur, on whose nice balance and *savoir-faire* in the devious paths of diplomatic functions all relied ; to Mr. Cachard, whose neat touch in all things French and American filled many gaps ; and to the Chairmen and members of the sub-Committees that worked diligently to insure a success worthy of the occasion. Abundant thanks are also due to M. Mollard, Chef de Protocol, for his unwearied suggestions in arranging the ceremonial, and to M. Lépine, Chief of Police, for his official aid and skill in making the proceedings move smoothly and without delays. Those who participated in the pleasure of the Fête have little conception of the labor involved in its elaboration.

All familiar with Mr. McCormick's



*Tous êtes prié de bien vouloir assister
à la Fête du bi-centenaire de la naissance de*

Benjamin Franklin

Patriote Diplomate et Philosophe

*et à l'inauguration de sa Statue présentée à
la Ville de Paris par*

Monsieur John W. Hayes,

*qui aura lieu au Palais du Crocadero, le Vendredi
20. Avril 1906, à onze heures du matin, très précises,*

sous le haut patronage de

l'Ambassadeur des Etats-Unis,

des Membres du Comité d'Honneur,

du Président et des Membres du Comité d'Organisation.

notable career were satisfied that under his strenuous and intelligent leadership the Fête would prove successful. It was so from every standpoint, and it is doubtful if even in his native America more earnest tribute was paid to the memory of Franklin than in Paris, where he accomplished for his country the best work of his life, and added so much to his own renown.

Admittance to the Ceremony was made by cards of invitation handsomely engraved, and ornamented with the Dupré Franklin medal, a copy of which is given. These cards were distributed through the usual official channels ; but the public was cordially invited, and due space was reserved for those without cards.

The date first chosen for the ceremony was April 20 ; but, owing to the San Francisco disaster, this was adjourned to April 27.

The programme of the day was divided into two parts : the first in the great Salle des Fêtes of the Trocadéro Palace, where a host can sit and easily listen to speeches or music ; and the second part at a handsome Pavilion erected for the accomodation of guests in front of the statue.

The Trocadéro was appropriately decorated, and the entrance and square smartened by the presence of a large detail of the Garde Républicaine ; while traffic opposite the statue was stopped. The Salle des Fêtes was embellished with flags of both nations and other emblems ; some four thousand people filled the hall ; on the platform, in the shadow of a copy of Houdon's portrait-bust of Franklin, and on either hand of the Ambassador, were seated the orators, the Committees and the invited guests of honor, in uniform and full dress ; the representatives of the Press were prominently placed, President Loubet honored the festival by his presence, and the boxes were thronged with the highest French officials, members of the diplomatic corps, and their families.

The American Colony, present in full force in gala attire, lent a gay aspect to the occasion, and the French vied with their American friends in swelling the numbers who should help do honor to the man who "snatched the lightning from the sky and the sceptre from tyrants." The scene was as brilliant as the audience was sincerely appreciative. The band of the Garde Républicaine—one of the best in the world—opened the ceremony at the appointed hour. Hereupon the Ambassador, in a few well-chosen and graceful words, welcomed the guests of honor and the audience, felicitously dwelling upon the international value of the celebration and the amity of the two great Republics, and presented the Orator of the Day.



INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS OF THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR.

WHEN my friend and compatriot Mr. John H. Harjes, esteemed at home and abroad, informed me of his generous intention of presenting a statue of Benjamin Franklin to the City of Paris, the approaching Bicentennial of Franklin's birth opened the way to broadening the unveiling ceremonies into the celebration which you have been asked to honor with your presence. The spontaneous and hearty co-operation of the French Government gives to the occasion the international character which brings into relief the chapter in Franklin's life which belongs to France as well as to the United States.

On the initiative of France's ally, the Emperor of Russia, the Hague Tribunal was established that governments might have a Court of Arbitration ready to their hand for the settlement of such differences as could be submitted to it. But to-day the voice of public sentiment holds from or impels governments to action, and that better acquaintance, that closer *entente* between peoples, which such international celebrations as this warm into life or keep alive, makes as never before for the cause of general peace and the well-being of man-



HIS EXCELLENCY ROBERT S. M.
American Ambassador

kind. Mr. Roosevelt has already shown in the most practical form and with notable success his desire to contribute to this cause.

In appointing a suitable person to speak for the United States on this occasion, it was therefore not only his purpose to celebrate the Bi-centenary of Benjamin Franklin, and by this joint celebration link closer the ties that bind France to the United States, but with that broader aim which has found its strongest international expression in the establishment of the Hague Tribunal. The eminent qualifications of the gentleman chosen by the President singled him out for this service.

I now have the honor to present Mr. Albert Henry Smyth, Special Representative of the United States for the Franklin Bi-centennial Celebration in Paris.

Thus introduced, Professor Smyth began his oration. He is a typical American, of good old Pennsylvania stock. The President of the United States could not have chosen a better representative. With distinctly American force, apparent in his attitude and address, he exhibited high culture and that straightforward character and directness which essentially fits him to train young men in all that goes to make up the value

of American manhood. His life has been a busy one. He has travelled much, studied much, written much ; and he is just finishing a ten-volume edition of the Works and Correspondence of Benjamin Franklin. His sturdy simplicity, grace of diction, learning and eminent oratorical fitness from the outset held the attention of his hearers, and this continued with abundant applause until the end.



THE ORATION OF PROFESSOR SMYTH

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

THE story is told that at a certain exhibition of historical portraits, Thomas Carlyle was seen absorbed in the contemplation of a picture of Benjamin Franklin. A small crowd attracted by curiosity gathered about him, to whom the sage of Chelsea said, as he pointed to the portrait: "there is the father of all the Yankees."

It would seem that Carlyle expressed the sentiment and opinion of mankind; for upon this two hundredth anniversary of the birth of the greatest American, the world has united in spontaneous and splendid celebration of his vast achievements and matchless public service.

Franklin had more than one birthday. He was born upon the sixth of January, *old style*, and when the change of calendar carried his natal anniversary eleven days forward he was wont to say that he still retained a kindly feeling for his old nominal birthday—and so celebrated upon both days. We are therefore warranted in continuing our commemoration

ative ceremonies through that part of January ; but these limits have proved too narrow for the enthusiasm of a grateful world, and we have witnessed the unparalleled spectacle of anniversary feasts and triumphant celebrations continuing in ever increasing volume from their inauguration in the first week of the year until their stately culmination and completion in the august proceedings of this day in Paris, and the elaborate ceremonials of the same hour in Philadelphia.

The history of the career of Franklin is the story of a struggle. It is the record of a life that began in humble and obscure surroundings and ended in splendour ; it contains therefore the substance of the tales that have chiefly fascinated mankind. The story is universally known, for Franklin's *Autobiography* is the most famous work of the kind in the English language. Everyone is familiar with the incidents of his flight from Boston—fugitive from the fist of a choleric brother—how he was nearly drowned in New York Bay, how he walked from Perth Amboy to Burlington, fifty miles through ever-during rain, how he took boat at Burlington, upon an October afternoon and landed at the foot of Market Street in Philadelphia upon the following Sunday morning, how he walked the quiet streets of the sober city—a ridiculous figure munching his roll—how he found shelter the first night in the strange city at the old Crooked Billet in Water Street.

The strange mutation of life ! This vagrant, adventurous lad, ragged, travel stained, awkward, his pockets stuffed out with shirts and stockings, and a

Dutch dollar his whole stock of cash—this humble soap-boiler's son—was destined to become the most conspicuous and admired figure of two continents, to stand before kings, to converse with scholars, and to receive every honor that the most venerable academies of learning could bestow,

“And moving up from high to higher
Become on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire.”

“Seest thou a man diligent in his calling, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men.” “This proverb,” said Franklin, “my father was fond of quoting to me, but I never thought that I should ever literally stand before kings, which honor has since happened, for I have stood before five, and even had the honor of sitting down with one, the King of Denmark, to dinner.”

More extraordinary even than the sure and firm-set steps with which he advanced to lofty and secure renown, is his astonishing grace and versatility. He was philosopher and philanthropist, as well as politician and printer. He was the first American to transcend provincial boundaries and limitations. As postmaster he went abroad over America and took the wind of all its moods. He was the first man of letters and the first man of science to achieve wide and permanent reputation in Europe, and he is the only diplomatist whose signature is appended to all the great state papers—the Treaty of Alliance, the Treaty of Peace, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. He was at home in the

cabinets of Lord Chatham and the Comte de Vergennes ; in the laboratories of Priestley and Lavoisier ; in the clinics of Sir John Pringle and Félix Vicq d'Azyr ; in the drawing-rooms of Mrs. Howe and Madame Helvétius. Although he had never been to college and had scarcely been to school he received the honorary degree of doctor of laws from St. Andrews and Oxford, and the honorary master of arts from Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary. He was elected unanimously a fellow of the Royal Society, an honour voluntarily conferred and all fees remitted, and from that venerable Society he received the Copley gold medal. In France he was appointed one of the eight foreign associates of the Academy of Sciences—an honour only once repeated in the history of America. Germany received him with respectful honours at Hanover and Göttingen. He was medalled and diplomatized by learned societies from St. Petersburg to Madrid, and from Edinburgh to Padua.

Never lived there a man more idolized. Everything about him was imitated and extolled : his spectacles, his Martin fur cap, his brown coat, his bamboo cane. Men carried their canes and their snuff boxes *à la Franklin*, women crowned him with flowers, and every patrician house in Paris showed a Franklin portrait on the wall, and a Franklin stove in one of the apartments. When Voltaire and Franklin kissed each other in the hall of the Academy, enthusiastic sages and tribunes thundered their applause—"behold Solon and Sophocles embrace."

It is impossible to trace in a few words the growth

of Franklin's vast European reputation. It rested primarily upon his scientific achievement. The eighteenth century was restlessly curious about natural phenomena, audacious in inquiry, and sceptical in philosophical speculation. It recognized and welcomed in Franklin a sagacious clear-sighted observer who had explored strange worlds of thought and wrung new and tremendous secrets from nature's close reserve. The mind of Europe pondering with all the intensity of fresh enthusiasm upon natural science was thrilled and amazed by the magnitude and meaning of Franklin's researches. In 1746 Peter Collinson sent from England a Leyden vial as a present to the Library that Franklin had established in Philadelphia. Franklin experimented with it, and in a twelvemonth, with the simplest apparatus ever employed by any scientist, he had mastered the theory of electrical science, dismissed the Dufay hypothesis of vitreous and resinous electricity, and established his single fluid theory. Nowhere is the old Latin saying "*Vestigia nulla retrorsum*" so true or so applicable as in the physical sciences. Yet strange to say we are at this moment witnessing in the light of recent discoveries the return of the whole world of science to the amazing generalization made by Franklin one hundred and fifty years ago.

He took a step farther and demonstrated the identity of lightning and electricity. At once he became, in a world enamoured of natural science, the object of universal interest and admiration. Louis XV., through Abbé Mazeas, returned his thanks and compliments to Dr. Franklin of Penn-

sylvania for his discoveries in electricity. Artists painted him with lightnings playing in the background of the picture, or lighting up his benign features. Condorcet addressed him as the modern Prometheus. Voltaire erected a lightning rod upon his house at Ferney, and the Duc de Villequier appealed to Franklin for information concerning the *paratonnerre*, as he desired to place one upon his house in Paris and one upon his *château* in Picardy—not that he had himself the slightest fear, but he would fain take every possible precaution on behalf of his mother-in-law!

In England a political issue was made even of a scientific discovery, and George III. ordered Franklin's sharp conductor to be removed from public buildings and blunt conductors substituted for them. At once the town rang with epigrams, of which the best perhaps was,

“While you, great George, for safety hunt,
And sharp conductors change for blunt,
Your kingdom's out of joint,
Franklin a wiser course pursues
And all your lightning harmless views
By keeping to the point.”

It was not alone in the domain of electricity that Franklin made important contributions to knowledge. He established the science of meteorology, demonstrated the geological theory of the earth in advance of Kant, held views upon light and heat that are perfectly consistent with those held by Cavendish and Clerk Maxwell, wrote upon contagious colds and the *colica pictonum* so successfully that he

was elected to membership in the royal societies of medicine in London and Paris, and touched informingly upon every subject familiar and unfamiliar in the eighteenth century. It is not strange that the world came to regard him as an encyclopædia of universal knowledge. Men of learning, the foremost in their professions, approached him in the attitude of pupils soliciting his explication of old problems, and his judgment upon new theories.

The audacity of eighteenth century thought was not confined to natural science. The spirit of the age interrogated the social order, tested its foundations, sank its probe deep into the crumbling substance of government and found only decay. What seemed so firmly based as to endure forever was built on stubble. Through law, religion, letters, politics, a subtle poison had diffused itself, and rank corruption mining all within infected unseen.

The outside was fair and tranquil, ancient glories shone upon a radiant Versailles, Lucullus feasts were daily given, gay and silken throngs chattered in the dazzling halls of palaces, red-heeled courtiers dined and danced—while here and there, in town and country, men who had drank bitter draughts of penury and despair saw upon the horizon images of portentous things to come.

Filangieri relentlessly examined the European systems of law, civil and criminal, and at each step of his progress turned to Franklin for direction. Lorenzo Manini created the Cis-Alpine Republic and leaned upon the encouraging of Franklin. The *Physiocrats*, Dupont de Nemours, Dubourg, Mirabeau, Turgot, Morellet, and the venerable apostle

Quesnay, were strengthened by the presence of Franklin in their speculative group.

Everyone knows the great epigram created by the good Turgot—*Eripuit caelo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis*—and everyone should know the lesser epigram of Balzac which declares that Franklin was the inventor of the lightning rod, the republic and the canard. Both refer, the one sublimely, the other wittily, to the achievements of Franklin in philosophy and politics. And they explain the incredible, almost fabulous popularity in which Franklin was held in Europe. He was the living presence of this new age, the incarnation of democracy, the successful antagonist of tyrants, the builder of happy states founded upon freedom and justice. With whatsoever modesty he disclaimed the honour of Turgot's epigram, and said to Nogaret: "*Malgré mes expériences sur l'électricité, la foudre tombe toujours à notre nez et à notre barbe, et quant au tyrans, nous avons été plus d'un million d'hommes occupé à lui arracher son sceptre*"—the world persisted in imputing to him alone the creation of the Republic and the triumphant leadership of the "dear insurgents."

Franklin was as unconscious as any fair dame or giddy courtier, "born to bloom and drop," of the strong current whose compulsive course was carrying the nation rapidly and irresistibly to ruin. During his residence in Paris he enjoyed familiar intercourse and in some instances close communion with those who in another decade, in the wild delirium of the Revolution, were to be first in the ranks of death. An obscure young notary in Arras,

destined to a sinister history, defended a client who had been ordered by his alarmed fellow townsmen to remove a lightning rod as it was a menace to the safety of the town. He wrote to Franklin soliciting information concerning lightning conductors, and concluded his letter with "the least of your claims to distinction, honoured Sir, is that you are the most illustrious *Savant* of the world,"—signed *Robespierre*.

At the mention of that name the bright day wanes, and the mutter of the coming storm disturbs the air!

Frequently Franklin received letters from a zealous experimenter in science who withholding his true name signed himself "the Representative." A cabal had been formed against him in the Academy; he craved Franklin's support and his presence that the cabal might be silenced by his sanction. He who was then inquiring scientifically into the nature of flame was soon to play with wilder fire and help to kindle the most tremendous conflagration in history. It was Jean Paul Marat.

Another friend, a physician, associated with Franklin in the investigation and exposure of the charlatan Mesmer, divulged to him his project of establishing himself and his friends in a settlement upon the Ohio river. His friends actually wandered to America, but he remained to play a part in the Revolution and to see his name—Guillotin—given to that—

"Patent reaper whose sheaves sleep sound
In dreamless garner underground."

Soon after Franklin's return to America the storm burst. He was aware of the disruption of ancient amities among those who had been his beloved associates, but happily he died too soon to witness the awful havoc wrought in the wild tumult of the Revolution when Le Veillard perished upon the revolutionary scaffold, Lavoisier by the axe of the guillotine, and Condorcet died of poison upon a prison floor.

To understand the political career of Benjamin Franklin it is necessary to revert to the years preceding the American Revolution. Before the complaints of the colonists became loud and impatient, he was an ardent and loyal imperialist. His ideal was a firmly confederated union of states enjoying liberty and autonomy. He believed that a citizen of Boston or Philadelphia should enjoy precisely the same rights and privileges as a citizen of Leeds or Sheffield. The British Empire he likened with homely comparison to a handsome porcelain vase—it were a great pity to break it, and he was convinced that the dismemberment of the Empire would mean the ruin of all its parts. When it was urged that in time the colonies by their growth would become the dominant half, he answered "Which is best, to have a total separation, or a change in the seat of government?"

Here he seems for a moment to have caught a glimpse of that historic vision of which Lord Rosebery in dream has recently seen the phantom retrospect. That eloquent statesman dwelt in fancy upon what might have happened if the elder Pitt had not left the House of Commons when he

became first minister : " He would have prevented or suppressed the reckless budget of Charles Townshend, have induced George III. to listen to reason, introduced representatives from America into the Imperial Parliament, and preserved the thirteen American colonies to the British Crown. The reform bill would have been passed much earlier, for the new blood of America would have burst the old vessels of the Constitution. And when, at last, the Americans became the majority, the seat of Empire would perhaps have been moved solemnly across the Atlantic, and Britain have become the historical shrine and European outpost of the world empire."

Some such vision seems to have wavered before the brain of Franklin as he reflected upon the future of America; but after years of labour he could only say, " I do not find that I have gained any point in either country, except that of rendering myself suspected by my impartiality : in England of being too much an American, and in America of being too much an Englishman."

It was the famous affair of the Hutchinson Letters which rendered the maintenance of this mediatorial position impossible to him. It is a commonplace of American history. Certain letters written by Thomas Hutchinson, royal governor of Massachusetts, to friends in England, in which he recommended the sending of troops and men-of-war, and advising that in the colonies "there must be an abridgment of what are called English liberties," fell into the hands of Franklin. How Franklin came into possession of them remains a

mystery. The source was undivulged by him. He transmitted them to America. Massachusetts Bay petitioned the government to remove from office the writer of the letters. In the fierce quarrel that ensued one man was wounded in a duel, and the solicitor general, Alexander Wedderburn, afterwards the Earl of Roslyn, assailed Franklin before the privy council with furious invective. It was a scene, as Lecky has said, well suited to the brush of an historical painter. For more than an hour Franklin stood, tranquilly, silently, before his malignant foe, his coolness and apathy in striking contrast with the violence and clamour of the Scotch declaimer, while grave men clapped their hands in boundless amused delight at the baiting of the American. "He has forfeited," cried Wedderburn, "all the respect of societies and of men. Men will watch him with a jealous eye; they will hide their papers from him, and lock up their escritaires. He will henceforth esteem it a libel to be called a man of letters, a man of *three letters*—*homo trium literarum*—*fur*, a thief." However, we may poise the cause in the even scales of justice, it is chiefly interesting at this moment as the critical event which converted Franklin into a stubborn opponent of the English government, and changed the American sentiment towards him into enthusiasm and affection. It was the one cherished hatred of his life, and how deep the poisoned shaft had sunk into his soul we may perhaps infer from the well-authenticated story that four years later when the treaty of alliance with France was signed, Franklin dressed himself for that day's historic

achievement in the same Manchester cloak of velvet which he had last worn when he stood under the pitiless storm of Wedderburn's vituperation.

On the twenty-sixth of September, 1776, Franklin was elected by Congress one of three commissioners to France. Turning to Dr. Rush who sat next him, Franklin said when the result of the balloting was announced : "I am old and good for nothing ; but, as the store-keepers say of their remnants of cloth, 'I am but a fag-end and you may have me for what you please.'" He arrived in Paris on the *Reprisal* after a stormy passage, beaten for thirty days by November gales. They brought in with them to Nantes two prizes, a brigantine laden with tar, turpentine and claret, and another with a cargo of cognac and flaxseed. He arrived in Paris on the twenty-second of December. Dr. Barbeau Dubourg, who three years before had edited Franklin's works, had already sent cards to all his acquaintances in Paris to announce his coming. Beaumarchais in the luxurious office of Hortalez & Co.,—the mysterious firm that was to finance the American revolution—a harp by his hand, and a score book on the table, awaited an interview with the only man who was his equal in wit, courage, versatility and sagacity. Franklin went at once to the ancient Hotel d'Hambourg, in the rue de l'Université, where Silas Deane lodged. Later, to escape the curious crowds that pressed about his doors, intruded upon various pretexts into his presence and followed him with applause whenever he walked abroad, he removed to Passy, where, in the Hotel

Valentinois, a dependance of the luxurious home of Le Ray de Chaumont, he found a quiet retreat where it was possible for him to command time for the dispatch of public business and the conduct of his incredibly voluminous correspondence with all the world. Chaumont was the close friend of Choiseul, and acted the part of an intermediary between Franklin and the court and foreign office.

Everywhere Franklin was received with an abundant cordiality, respect and affection for which history furnishes scarcely a parallel. Every word he uttered was caught and pondered, and remembered; every action was studied and imitated. In him was the promise of better days and the augury of a more fortunate social order. "Figure to yourself," he wrote to a friend, "an old man with gray hair appearing under a martin fur cap, among the powdered heads of Paris."

The enthusiasm for *le grand Franklin* became a passion, became idolatry. He bore it all with composure, his serenity was undisturbed by flattery, his confidence undaunted by disaster. He received the tidings of misfortune with a smile and a jest. "Howe has taken Philadelphia," mourned Paris. "No," said Franklin, "Philadelphia has taken Howe." His cheer and confidence became the encouragement of America and the inspiration of France. When rumors of disaster circulated in the ports of France, the Frenchmen who came to condole with *Père Franklin* found the patriarch philosophically calm and confident. To all such reports he replied "*ça ira, ça ira*,"—"it will go on." And when dark days came for France, in the wild days of the Terror,

and men despaired of everything, they remembered the serenity of the great American, and they repeated to one another until the repetition became a watchword of hope and courage and endurance—"ça ira, ça ira."

Chaumont gave his house freely to the envoys and stripped himself of his fortune to supply American necessities. "So much the worse," said he, "for those who would not do the same if they had the opportunity ; so much the better for me to have immortalized my house by receiving into it Dr. Franklin and his associates."

Now began nine years of toil incredible, of heart-breaking disappointments, worries innumerable, through all which Franklin moved patiently, tranquilly, deliberately, emerging triumphantly at last to throw himself into the arms of the Duc de Rochefoucauld, after signing the Treaty of Peace, exclaiming : "My friend, could I have hoped, at my age, to enjoy such a happiness !"

He accomplished the great work alone. His associates were much more in the nature of hindrances than helps. Ralph Izard was sent to Tuscany, the haughty and insolent Arthur Lee to Spain, John Adams to Holland, Dana to Russia ; but they never really reached or influenced the courts to which they were accredited, nor did they receive any favourable replies to their reiterated petitions.

The little that was accomplished in Holland was due to Franklin working through Charles Dumas. The little that Spain was induced to do was accomplished by Franklin through the Count de Campomanes and the Conde d'Aranda. But the only

substantial aid came from France. The Treaty of Alliance gave dignity and political importance to the insurgents and converted a rebellion into a revolution. It is certain beyond the possibility of doubt or contention that the Independence of America was won by the aid of France, and it is equally certain that Franklin alone obtained or could obtain that aid. He turned the adulation with which he was everywhere greeted into a perpetual benefit to his country. He appealed again and again to De Vergennes and the King—"the most amiable and most powerful Prince of Europe"—to save American credit by additional grants of money. And he never appealed in vain. After the financial budgets of the year had been made up and closed, applications for money for a particular purpose which the government had over and over again provided for and furnished, were yet once more favourably heard, and, unwearied by the large and importunate demands, other millions were released from the almost exhausted treasury of the nation.

America can never forget the fidelity and magnanimity of her ally. After a hundred years the mere memory of the heroic friendship, the unfaltering and unswerving loyalty of France, brings pride to the forehead and lustre to the eye. "A father," said Père Bertier, "is in his own country when he is surrounded by his children ; in Paris we are all *Franklinistes*." His love for France and the love of France for him forever must unite the two nations that to-day lay upon his grave a wreath of deathless gratitude.

After Cornwallis had been *burgoinised*, as the French then said, and the infant Hercules had strangled the second serpent in his cradle, the English government made overtures of peace. It was the aim of their diplomacy to divide America and France. David Hartley, a member of Parliament and a dear friend of Franklin, wrote to him that he understood that America was disposed to enter into a separate treaty with Great Britain. "This," replied Franklin, "has always given me more disgust than my friendship permits me to express. I believe there is not a man in America—a few English Tories excepted—that would not spurn at the thought of deserting a noble and generous friend for the sake of a truce with an unjust and cruel enemy. . . . The Congress will never instruct their Commissioners to obtain a peace on such ignominious terms, and though there can be but few things in which I should venture to disobey their orders, yet if it were possible for them to give such an order as this I should certainly refuse to act. I should instantly renounce their Commission and banish myself forever from so infamous a country."

In 1785 Congress accepted Franklin's resignation and permitted him to return home. He was old and feeble, distressed with gout and tortured with stone. It was not possible for him to go to Versailles for an audience of leave. He wrote to the Count de Vergennes : "May I beg the favor of you, Sir, to express respectfully for me to his Majesty, the deep sense I have of all the inestimable benefits his goodness has conferred on my country ; a

sentiment that it will be the business of the little remainder of life now left me, to impress equally on the minds of all my countrymen. My sincere prayers are, that God may shower down his blessings on the King, the Queen, their children and all the royal family to the latest generations ! ”

One of the queen's litters borne by Spanish mules was placed at his disposal by the Duc de Coigny, and at a footpace they began the long journey to the coast.

The leisure he had longed for was still denied him. Immediately upon his return to Philadelphia he was elected President of Pennsylvania. “ They have eaten my flesh,” said he, “ and seem resolved now to pick my bones.”

He died on the seventeenth of April, 1790. The House of Representatives decreed that the members should wear mourning for one month. Mirabeau rose at the opening of the National Assembly and said, “ Franklin is dead ! The genius that freed America and poured a flood of light over Europe, has returned to the bosom of the Divinity.” The National Assembly wore mourning for three days. The City of Paris, the Revolutionary Clubs, and the Academy of Sciences listened to eulogies of the great man who had been the first ambassador from America to France, the first of the nations of the world to receive such a representative.

While living in England Franklin received from a friend in Virginia some bottles of Madeira. Upon opening one of them there fell with the first pouring of the wine three drowned flies. Franklin had heard that flies could be revived after long seeming

dead. He placed them upon a sieve and put them in the sunlight. In less than three hours two of them began to recover life. They commenced by some convulsive motions of the thighs, and at length they beat and brushed their wings with their hind feet "and soon after began to fly, finding themselves in Old England without knowing how they came thither." "I wish," said Franklin, "that it were possible from this instance to invent a method of embalming drowned persons in such a manner that they may be recalled to life at any period however distant ; for, having a very ardent desire to see and observe the state of America a hundred years hence, I should prefer to any ordinary death the being immersed in a cask of Madeira wine with a few friends till that time, to be then recalled to life by the solar warmth of my dear country !"

If after the slumber of a century his eyes had opened, upon what a world would their calm gaze have rested ! The vast images that he saw in glimmering dawn have become the common places of schoolboys ; his daring prophecies in philosophy and politics have been more than fulfilled. He would have beheld two great and proud nations, justifying his unchanging faith in popular instincts and institutions, celebrating in comradeship the words he spoke and the deeds he did, and holding in grateful and perpetual memory his lifelong labours and sacrifices !

And he who so often repeated that there never was a good war or a bad peace, would have rejoiced to note the obliteration of all ancient antagonisms

and the complete reconciliation of old time foes ; and have learned with joy that the three countries, for whose welfare he had toiled and suffered, were now, in blessed friendship, communicating through paths of peace the bounty and the benison of civilization to the world.

When the applause subsided, the Band played the "Star Spangled Banner," all standing, and many joining in the well-beloved national air. Thereupon the Ambassador, in a short, dignified and tactful French address thanked the State and City authorities for their warm and efficient welcome, and introduced, as the speaker chosen as the representative of the French Government, and with a happy reference to his fecundity, M. Barthou, Minister of Public Works.



DISCOURS DE L'AMBASSADEUR DES ÉTATS-UNIS

C'E m'est un très agréable devoir, Monsieur le Ministre, en inaugurant cette cérémonie, de remercier le Gouvernement de la République qui a bien voulu s'associer à nos efforts pour lui donner l'éclat qu'elle doit avoir, et qui est ici dignement représenté par des hommes dont le talent et le caractère sont encore relevés, à nos yeux, par les sympathies qu'ils ne cessent de témoigner à la grande République du Nouveau Monde avec laquelle celle du Vieux a tant de traits communs.

Aussi bien, Messieurs, cette Fête américaine est en même temps une Fête française. C'est avec le grand citoyen, dont nous célébrons aujourd'hui le deuxième Centenaire, qu'a commencé l'amitié fondée sur l'alliance, unique dans l'histoire, d'où date cette marche triomphante de la liberté dans le monde que nos deux nations ont inaugurée ensemble.

Franklin, dont Jefferson a dit qu'on pouvait lui succéder, mais non le remplacer, est si complètement identifié dans la pensée de la foule aux sentiments

d'égalité, de fraternité et de liberté, qui sont si chers à tous les Français, qu'on surprendrait sans doute bien des gens en leur disant qu'il n'était pas lui-même Français.

Bien mieux que moi, M. Barthou, qui va prendre la parole au nom du Gouvernement de la République, vous dira, dans le langage élevé dont il a le secret, pourquoi les deux Gouvernements qui représentent plus particulièrement les légitimes aspirations de la démocratie moderne, s'unissent en ce jour pour honorer la mémoire de Benjamin Franklin.

M. Barthou's career is too well known in France to need commendation here, and his discourse was strong, scholarly and to the point.



DISCOURS DE M. BARTHOU

*Ministre des Travaux Publics,
Représentant du Gouvernement Français.*

MONSIEUR L'AMBASSADEUR,
MESDAMES, MESSIEURS,

LE Gouvernement de la République Française, en s'associant à l'hommage rendu à la mémoire de Franklin, n'a pas voulu seulement honorer un nom illustre et populaire, il a tenu aussi à donner à la grande République Américaine un témoignage officiel de son amitié toujours cordiale et fidèle.

L'épouvantable catastrophe qui a jeté les Etats-Unis dans la désolation et dans le deuil vient ajouter à l'expression de ces sentiments une force nouvelle. Nous avons ressenti nous-mêmes, dans une épreuve récente et cruelle, la solidarité qui, d'un bout à l'autre du monde, unit et rapproche tous les peuples. Les Etats-Unis nous ont envoyé les témoignages précieux de leur sympathie. Au nom du Gouvernement de la République, j'adresse à la nation américaine, frappée par un terrible désastre les regrets unanimes de la nation française, profondément émue.

L'amitié loyale et confiante, dont les deux pays éprouvent au même degré à la fois le besoin impérieux et l'action bienfaisante, ne pouvait trouver, pour s'affirmer et pour se développer, une occasion meilleure que l'inauguration d'une statue élevée à Benjamin Franklin. Ce grand nom appartient à leur histoire commune. Il suffit de le prononcer pour évoquer les souvenirs glorieux d'une alliance dont Franklin fut le principal artisan.

Quand il signa le 6 et le 8 Février 1778, les deux traités par lesquels la France garantissait la liberté, la souveraineté et l'indépendance absolue et illimitée des nouveaux Etats, Franklin était âgé de 72 ans. Aucune vie n'avait été plus remplie, plus utile et plus féconde que la sienne. Sa célébrité était universelle. Les plus grands hommes de tous les pays se disputaient le profit de son expérience et l'honneur de son amitié. Il avait par une variété de services et de titres qui est peut-être restée sans exemple, conquis tous les suffrages. La foule et l'élite, les savants et les philosophes, les hommes d'Etat et le peuple, s'accordaient sur son nom glorieux. Il faudrait penser à Voltaire dont il fut l'ami, pour trouver, au cours du XVIII^e siècle, une popularité égale à la sienne. On ne saurait faire un plus grand éloge de cette extraordinaire fortune qu'en disant combien il l'avait préparée et méritée.

« Né dans l'indigence et dans l'obscurité, écrit-il dans ses Mémoires, et y ayant passé mes premières années, je me suis élevé dans le monde à un état d'opulence, et j'y ai acquis quelque réputation. »

Cette ascension, dans laquelle le hasard ne prit aucune part, fut le fruit de son travail, de sa dis-

cipline et de sa méthode. Aucun homme ne mérita plus que Franklin d'être appelé le fils de ses œuvres. Il se fit tout entier lui-même. Entre les années de son enfance, où il coupait et préparait des mèches dans la fabrique de chandelles de son père, et celles de sa verte vieillesse où sa diplomatie habile secondait la vaillance et servait les desseins de Washington, il ne cessa pas de s'instruire, de s'élever et de perfectionner en lui les dons d'une nature exceptionnelle.

Ouvrier imprimeur, il lut et épuisa rapidement les bibliothèques qui étaient à sa disposition. Avidé de savoir, épris d'omniscience, il cultiva avec un goût égal, les lettres et les sciences. S'il s'exalta, comme tant d'hommes de son époque, aux *Vies* de Plutarque, qui furent comme le bréviaire moral du XVIII^e siècle, on sait qu'il connut les *Lettres Provinciales*, et qu'il s'en inspira. Sans doute il tempéra de bonhomie l'âpre satire de Pascal, mais j'ai quelque plaisir à rappeler que l'esprit de Franklin dut à notre plus grand prosateur l'un des éléments de sa formation.

Il faudrait des heures entières pour le suivre au cours de sa carrière. Moraliste, inventeur, directeur des postes, gouverneur de province, député au Congrès et diplomate, Franklin remplit des rôles dont un seul suffirait à illustrer une autre existence. Il ne fut inférieur à aucune difficulté et à aucun devoir. Partout et toujours, dans les situations les plus humbles comme dans les postes les plus élevés, il donna la preuve d'une ingéniosité, d'une activité, et d'une probité vraiment admirables.

Ses préceptes moraux et pratiques n'ont rien perdu de leur humour, qui instruit en amusant, et

plusieurs sont passés en proverbe. Franklin a donné à la conscience humaine des directions et des exemples qui font de lui l'un de ses guides et l'un de ses bienfaiteurs.

Ses découvertes, dans l'ordres des phénomènes et des problèmes électriques, égalent son nom au plus grand. Il fut un précurseur génial. Ses expériences sur la foudre, auxquelles nous devons les moyens de nous en préserver, sont populaires. Il avait, en effet, un don tout particulier pour rendre la science accessible, et, comme l'a dit Humphry Davy, il sut par de très petits moyens établir de grandes vérités. Il associait d'ailleurs à un don exceptionnel d'observation un sens pratique très avisé et très fertile. Ses inventions, si variées, attestent un esprit toujours en travail et en éveil.

Son administration communale durant laquelle il fonda des bibliothèques et des hôpitaux, des compagnies d'assurance contre l'incendie et des académies, et dans laquelle il ne négligea ni le pavage ni l'éclairage ni la police, établis ou développés par ses soins, méritera toujours d'être citée en modèle. Là comme ailleurs il devança son temps et ouvrit les voies de l'avenir. Je ne saurais d'ailleurs, omettre de dire que cette habileté et cette activité le désignèrent au choix du gouvernement britannique pour la charge importante de maître général des postes en Amérique. Il réussit le difficile problème d'augmenter les revenus de ce grand service et d'en améliorer les conditions ; il put satisfaire ainsi aux exigences du public sans nuire aux ressources du budget. Je sais des maîtres de postes qui envient sa fortune et son secret.

Mais toutes les pages de la vie publique de Franklin s'effacent devant les deux négociations qui remplirent plusieurs années de son existence, la première en Angleterre où il avait mission de protester contre le timbre et contre les exactions des Gouverneurs de la Pennsylvanie, la seconde en France où il rallia la monarchie à la cause des *insurgents* d'Amérique. Il déploya dans ces deux graves affaires dont l'une prépara et entraîna l'autre, une clairvoyance, une patience et une fermeté qui en font l'égal des meilleurs diplomates de profession.

Il souffrit à Londres pour remplir le mandat dont la confiance de ses concitoyens l'avaient investi, des vexations, des suspicions et des injures dont le récit émeut encore. Il opposa à ces inimitiés redoutables le tranquille sang-froid d'une conscience sûre d'elle-même. Lord Chatham le vengea d'ailleurs, devant la Chambre des Pairs, de ces outrages imprévus et immérités en le représentant comme « un homme pour la science et la sagesse duquel toute l'Europe a la plus haute estime, qu'elle le place sur le même rang que Newton, et qui fait honneur non seulement à la nation anglaise, mais encore à la nation humaine. »

Quand, en 1776, mises par le Parlement Britannique, « hors de la paix du Roi et de la protection de la Couronne, » les treize colonies proclamèrent leur indépendance et constituèrent les Etats-Unis d'Amérique, le sort des armes, malgré leur discipline et leur courage, trahit leurs espérances. Elles éprouvèrent pour appuyer leur résistance, le besoin d'un secours extérieur. Le Congrès sollicita l'appui de la France, où Franklin fut

envoyé comme négociateur. Il n'y venait pas pour la première fois. Déjà, en 1767 et en 1769, il avait séjourné quelque temps à Paris, où surtout auprès des savants, sa présence n'avait pas passée inaperçue. Il avait même été présenté à Louis XV. Mais ses premiers voyages ne lui avaient révélé que les côtés extérieurs de la société française. L'âme même de la nation lui était restée inconnue et son jugement, un peu sévère, se ressentait de cette ignorance. Cette fois les circonstances et le rôle exceptionnel qu'elles lui assignaient lui révélèrent toute la France. Il revenait couvert de gloire et son voyage prenait le caractère d'un événement public. Il fut reçu en triomphateur. Les *insurgents* d'Amérique passionnaient et enthousiasmaient l'opinion. Les vœux qu'elle formait pour leur cause n'étaient pas platoniques. On voulait se battre avec eux et pour eux.

La popularité de Franklin ajoutait à cette frénésie chevaleresque. Dès le premier jour, il fut à la mode. Littéralement on se le disputait. Son habit de velours mordoré, ses bas blancs, ses cheveux étalés, ses lunettes sur le nez, son chapeau blanc sous le bras — ainsi le dépeignait Madame Du Deffand — lui donnaient une physionomie originale dont Paris raffolait.

Il était assailli de sollicitations et de demandes. Les lettres et les visites ne lui laissaient pas un instant de repos. C'étaient surtout les militaires avides de batailles et de gloire, qui le harcelaient. « Vous ne pouvez vous faire une idée, écrivait-il, à quel point je suis harassé. On cherche tous mes amis et on les excède, à charge à eux de m'excéder. Les fonctionnaires supérieurs, de tout rang, dans

tous les départements, des dames, grandes et petites, sans compter les solliciteurs de profession, m'importunent du matin au soir. Le bruit de chaque voiture qui entre dans ma cour suffit maintenant pour m'effrayer. Je redoute d'accepter une invitation de dîner en ville, presque sûr que je suis d'y rencontrer quelque officier ou quelque ami d'officiers qui, dès qu'un verre ou deux de champagne m'ont mis en bonne humeur, commence son attaque contre moi. »

Toutes ces attaques n'étaient pas d'ailleurs, également importunes. Ne vient-il pas d'avouer que les dames, grandes ou petites, recherchaient sa compagnie ? Il fréquenta les plus célèbres, M^{me} Geoffrin, M^{me} Du Deffrand, M^{mes} de Luxembourg et de Boufflers, M^{me} D'Houdetot et surtout M^{me} Helvétius qu'il appelait *Notre Dame d'Auteuil* et dont la grâce spirituelle le charma au point qu'il offrit, sans succès, d'ailleurs, de lui apporter en dot ses soixante-seize ans et son nom illustre. Il connut Malesherbes, Turgot, Lavoisier, Condorcet, Chamfort Cabania, d'Alembert, Diderot, qui étaient ses amis et souvent ses hôtes. Il présenta son petit-fils à la bénédiction de Voltaire et les deux grands vieillards assis à côté l'un de l'autre, assistèrent au milieu des applaudissements enthousiastes d'une assemblée profondément émue, à une séance publique de l'Académie des Sciences.

Ainsi Franklin avait conquis l'opinion toute entière. Il lui fallait maintenant gagner la Cour et le Roi à la cause dont il était le missionnaire et le défenseur. La force qu'il tenait de l'opinion ne fut pas étrangère à ce résultat.

Condorcet, dans son magnifique Éloge, a remarqué que « comme négociateur, Franklin observait beaucoup et agissait peu. » Mais il ne lui fait pas un reproche de cette lenteur, sagement calculée. « Ce calme, dit-il, n'était pas de l'indifférence. C'était la supériorité de raison d'un homme qui savait que le monde moral est assujéti, comme le monde physique, à des lois certaines, et qui voyait d'avance, dans ces lois immuables le triomphe de sa Patrie. »

Vergenne ne se décida pas tout d'abord à s'engager avec les États-Unis dans des négociations officielles. Mais les événements dont Franklin sut tirer merveilleusement parti, précipitèrent sa volonté. Les signatures furent échangées en février 1778, dans deux traités, l'un d'amitié et de commerce, l'autre d'alliance. Les négociateurs américains en les envoyant au Président des nouveaux États disaient : « Nous avons de grandes raisons d'être satisfaits de la bonne volonté de la nation française, et nous souhaitons que le Congrès la cultive par tous les moyens les plus propres à maintenir l'union et à la rendre permanente. »

Ce vœu a été exaucé. Dans une dépêche, dont l'accent a ému notre nation, l'illustre Président Roosevelt écrivait hier encore que « la France tient une place particulière dans le cœur du peuple américain. » La part que nous prenons à cette belle cérémonie atteste la réciprocité de nos sentiments. Franklin était digne d'en provoquer l'expression. Sa statue rappellera aux deux peuples les souvenirs glorieux d'une amitié dont aucun événement n'a, depuis plus d'un siècle, troublé le loyal accord. Elle sera pour les deux démocraties, un exemple et un

symbole. Mirabeau, en apprenant la mort de Franklin, disait à l'Assemblée Constituante, dont il provoqua le deuil pendant trois jours : « Les représentants des nations ne doivent recommander à leur hommage que les héros de l'humanité. » Franklin fut un de ces héros. Il appartient à l'humanité. Mais cette statue, donnée par l'Amérique à la France, témoignera aussi qu'il fut, selon le mot de Sainte-Beuve, le plus Français des Américains.

That M. Barthou's address was appreciated was shown by prolonged applause. The Band then played that most wonderful of all national anthems, the "Marseillaise," all standing, which closed the ceremony in the Salle des Fêtes.

In words well in harmony with the occasion, the Ambassador thanked the speakers for their brilliant efforts, and invited the audience to proceed to the Place du Trocadéro, where the second part of the ceremony was to be held.

The distinguished guests on the platform filed out according to official rank, followed by the audience; and all reunited under the Pavilion, around the statue, and on the square, which was kept free by a

large detachment of the Guard. The Band stationed on the square played during this intermission a well known march.

Arrived at the Pavilion, the Ambassador again called attention to the beautiful statue shortly to be undraped, and with a gracious reference to his generous past, introduced the donor, Mr. John Henry Harjes.

Mr. Harjes, addressing himself to the nation, the city, the distinguished guests and the audience, thereupon presented the statue to the City of Paris. It was a singularly happy incident when, as the address was opened, the sun, which had been obscured during most of the day, burst forth, and between the trees which decorated the little reservation in which stands the statue, fell in a flood of light upon the white head of the speaker. Mr. Harjes' address was pertinent and felicitous, and in delivering it no one would have credited him with his five and seventy winters. Like Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes he appeared "seventy years young."



MR. JOHN H. HARJES
Donor of the Franklin Statue

DISCOURS DE PRÉSENTATION

PRONONCÉ PAR

Mr. JOHN H. HARJES

MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

MONSIEUR LE PRÉFET,

MONSIEUR LE PRÉSIDENT DU CONSEIL MUNICIPAL DE PARIS,

MONSIEUR LE PRÉSIDENT DU CONSEIL GÉNÉRAL DE LA SEINE,

MESDAMES ET MESSIEURS,

APRÈS les discours si pleins d'éloquence que nous venons d'écouter avec tant d'intérêt et où se trouvent fidèlement retracées la vie et les œuvres de celui dont nous honorons aujourd'hui la mémoire, je me permettrai personnellement d'ajouter quelques mots seulement.

C'est comme citoyen des États-Unis et plus particulièrement comme habitant de Philadelphie, ville d'adoption de Franklin, où j'ai résidé de

longues années, que j'ai conçu l'idée de faire élever à Paris un témoignage visible en l'honneur de cet homme si grand, si éminent : BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, qui fut non-seulement le meilleur des citoyens mais un patriote enthousiaste, un homme d'État glorieux et un profond philosophe, dont la culture intellectuelle si variée donna un essor lumineux aux sciences.

Son souvenir ici, dans cette ville qui lui fut si sympathique et la proximité de la demeure où il séjourna si longtemps et avec tant de bonheur, me suggérèrent naturellement cet emplacement au commencement de la rue qui porte son nom, comme étant tout désigné pour recevoir sa statue. Au cœur de ce pays pour lequel il éprouva un vif attachement, motivé par les bontés dont il y fut comblé, je puis même dire par la constante affection qu'on lui témoigna, où Franklin passa plusieurs des années les plus heureuses de sa vie et où l'extrême régime monarchique aussi bien que le gouvernement le plus démocratique se réunirent pour l'honorer pendant sa vie et révéler sa mémoire après sa mort.

Enfin, dans ce pays si éclairé et si hospitalier dont l'élan généreux et l'aide magnifique lui accorda un soutien moral et matériel en lui fournissant les hommes, l'argent, tout le nécessaire qui devait couronner de succès la mission de notre premier ambassadeur et acquérir un juste titre à notre reconnaissance.

Aucun traité, aucune alliance n'est utile pour faire vivre chez mes compatriotes ce sentiment d'éternelle gratitude envers la République Sœur

“La Belle France” source d’une amitié, laquelle j’espère ne fera que croître et prospérer dans l’avenir.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to express one request and to solicit the aid of all of you, so that it may find a favorable echo on the other side of the Ocean, namely, that the Federal Government at Washington and those of the different States may join hands to declare the date of the birth of Benjamin Franklin as a national holiday for all times to come,—which surely is well merited.

Animé de ces sentiments et avec le plus grand plaisir, je viens offrir à la Ville de Paris la statue de Benjamin Franklin, en la priant de vouloir bien l’accepter.

During the address of Mr. Harjes, the cords holding the covering were drawn by Misses Mary C. Waddington and Hope Dorothy Harjes, grand-daughters of the donor, and the statue stood in its full charm before the audience; and during the same period, the while the Band was playing “Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean,” in which many voices of guests joined, the slow booming of a salute of fifteen guns

from the battery in the Ile des Cygnes, in memory of the first American Minister Plenipotentiary to France, lent a certain solemnity to the occasion. Thereupon M. Chautard, President of the Municipal Council of Paris, was introduced by the Ambassador, and delivered a discourse showing full appreciation of the value of the ceremony in binding together the two great Republics.



DISCOURS DE M. CHAUTARD

Président du Conseil Municipal

MONSIEUR LE REPRÉSENTANT DES ÉTATS-UNIS,
MONSIEUR L'AMBASSADEUR,
MESSIEURS LES MINISTRES,
MESSIEURS,

J'APPORTE le salut et l'hommage de Paris à la mémoire de Franklin.

Notre commune, qui s'associe en 1906 à la fête brillante de son bi-centenaire, a pris part en 1790 au deuil national des Américains, quand cet homme de génie disparut de la terre. La Halle aux blés, devenue aujourd'hui la Bourse de commerce, fut tendue de noir par les soins de la Municipalité et l'abbé Fauchet y prononça l'éloge civique du sage de Philadelphie, en présence des députés, des électeurs et de la foule des citoyens.

Les sociétés savantes et les organisations parisiennes suivirent l'exemple donné par l'Hôtel de Ville, et solennellement exprimèrent les sentiments d'admiration et de regret des amis de la liberté.

Des orateurs éminents, La Rochefoucauld à la

Société de 1789, Condorcet à l'Académie, glorifièrent le philosophe et le savant; la jeune Société des Imprimeurs, dans laquelle revivait une des plus anciennes corporations de Paris, voulant honorer à sa façon la mémoire de son grand confrère, se réunit dans un atelier où son président prononça l'éloge du grand homme, tandis que ses membres composaient le discours, l'imprimaient et le distribuaient à l'assemblée.

Ces manifestations en l'honneur d'un illustre étranger sont restées uniques dans nos annales; elles s'expliquent non seulement par la grandeur de son rôle et l'importance de l'œuvre accomplie, mais encore par cette considération particulière que Franklin avait conquis le droit de cité parmi nous et que Paris l'avait adopté.

Il y était venu en 1767 et en 1769, et il y avait séjourné sans interruption de décembre 1776 à juillet 1785, soit près de neuf ans; il avait, en un mot, passé au milieu de nous plus de la dixième partie de son existence très longue.

Et ce véritable sage ne s'isolait pas, au contraire.

Il étudiait, il observait sans cesse nos mœurs et nos usages; il excusait la tyrannie de la mode, il critiquait avec bienveillance nos travers, nos frivolités qui, disait-il, ne font de mal à personne; et il donnait à ses jugements une forme ingénieuse, humoristique, toujours marquée au coin du meilleur sens populaire. Ses pensées et ses maximes souvent élevées, puissantes parfois, sont toujours accessibles au peuple dont il connaissait merveilleusement le sentiment et l'idéal. Elles sont exprimées avec clarté et simplicité, comme le préfère notre esprit

français. Aussi fut-il l'objet d'un véritable engouement dans notre ville.

Ses médaillons et ses portraits étaient partout, on le portait en bagues, en bracelets, sur les cannes et les tabatières.

On peut dire que de tous les étrangers il fut le plus populaire à Paris. Ne serait-ce pas parce qu'il fut le plus parisien des étrangers de son temps?

La statue que nous inaugurons est ici bien placée.

Elle fera en effet revivre Franklin en effigie dans le lieu même de Paris qu'il préférerait, et qu'il avait choisi pour y demeurer.

C'est dans ce quartier de Passy, renommé pour la pureté de ses eaux, qu'il habita longtemps, et dans ce lieu même, sur cette colline, il promena souvent ses pas, seul ou en compagnie de ses admirateurs. Il affectionnait, dit-on, le joli point de vue dont on jouissait de cette butte où s'élevaient des moulins, et il a dû s'asseoir bien des fois tout près d'ici pour y rêver et y méditer sous les ombrages de quelque « folie » champêtre, et s'y reposer dans le calme de la nature, devant les coteaux de Passy tout plantés de vignes, qui dévalaient jusqu'au fleuve tranquille. Au delà, s'étendait jusqu'à l'horizon la vaste plaine de Vaugirard parsemée des fermes très riches de l'abbaye Saint-Germain et Franklin, admirant leurs gras pâturages et la science agricole de nos cultivateurs, vulgarisa plus tard en Amérique les procédés auxquels il s'était intéressé.

Il aimait beaucoup Paris et pensa un jour à ne plus le quitter, et il écrivait à son fils, le 16 avril 1784 : « Je suis ici chez un peuple qui m'aime et me

respecte, nation charmante pour y vivre, et peut-être me déciderai-je à y mourir, car mes amis d'Amérique s'en vont l'un après l'autre, et j'ai été si longtemps absent que maintenant je serais presque un étranger dans ma patrie. »

La destinée pourtant en avait ordonné autrement et Franklin passa ses cinq dernières années au milieu de ses compatriotes. Il n'avait pas quitté Paris et la France sans regrets; il s'intéressait très vivement à notre évolution politique et sociale et il jugeait avec sérénité, avec impartialité et une rare justesse de vues les hommes et les événements.

« Les Français sont convaincus, disait-il, que la meilleure de toutes les œuvres est l'œuvre de la paix. Les idées de conquête sont passées de mode. Les gens sages de ce pays estiment que la France est assez grande, que toute son ambition doit être la justice et la magnanimité envers les autres nations, la fidélité et l'utilité envers ses alliés. Sa modération lui est plus glorieuse que sa victoire. »

Cette évocation de l'opinion de ce grand homme n'est-elle pas d'actualité?

Il manifesta jusqu'à son dernier souffle de son plus grand amour pour Paris, et tout à la fin de 1788 il écrivait encore à M^{me} Lavoisier :

« Tout le bonheur dont je jouis dans ma patrie ne me fait pas oublier Paris et les neuf années de bonheur que j'y ai goûté dans la douce intimité d'un monde dont la conversation est instructive, les manières séduisantes et qui, par dessus toutes les nations de la terre, possède au plus haut degré l'art de se faire aimer des étrangers. Et maintenant, même dans mon sommeil, je trouve que la scène de

tous mes rêves agréables se passe à Paris ou dans le voisinage. »

Paris est reconnaissant à Franklin de l'affection qu'il lui a inspirée et il est fier d'avoir pu la mériter. Il est heureux et fier d'offrir encore son hospitalité à de nombreux Américains qui professent à son égard les sentiments de leur glorieux ancêtre, et il fera tout pour les justifier.

J'exprime les remerciements de la ville de Paris à M. Harjes, donateur du monument, et au comité d'organisation de ces fêtes.

Au nom de Paris, j'accepte la statue de Franklin dont je prends possession pour la conserver à jamais comme un dépôt sacré.

The speaker was warmly applauded.

Following M. Chautard, the Ambassador introduced M. Autrand, Secretary General of the Prefecture of the Seine, whose markedly apt speech was by no means the least because the last of the day.

DISCOURS DE M. AUTRAND

*Secrétaire Général
de la Préfecture de la Seine*

MONSIEUR LE REPRÉSENTANT,
MONSIEUR L'AMBASSADEUR,
MESSIEURS LES MINISTRES,
MESDAMES,
MESSIEURS,

TOUT à l'heure, au Trocadéro, des paroles éloquentes ont célébré, au nom des États-Unis et du gouvernement de la République, à l'occasion du deuxième centenaire de sa naissance, la mémoire de Benjamin Franklin. Le don généreux de sa statue, la remise qui en est faite à la Ville dans cette inauguration solennelle, nous permettent d'associer plus étroitement Paris à la commémoration de ce grand souvenir.

A vrai dire, pas plus que les noms des autres héros de l'Indépendance, de Lafayette et de Washington, dont l'image se dresse fièrement sur nos places publiques, celui de Franklin ne s'est effacé de nos mémoires. Pendant plus d'un siècle, sa gloire s'est conservée chez nous aussi pure que dans son

propre pays, et, près d'ici, notre cité peut la montrer gravée sur ses murs en lettres d'or.

C'est que, par une coïncidence singulièrement remarquable, son histoire s'est trouvée mêlée à celle de la liberté naissante de nos deux patries. La vie de Franklin, c'est, pour les États-Unis l'histoire de son brusque réveil, la conquête de son indépendance, l'organisation de son autonomie. Pour la France, c'est pendant les années que Franklin y passa, l'histoire des premiers efforts pour se dégager du joug douloureux d'une tradition séculaire. C'est l'époque où, grâce à lui, les amis de la liberté saluaient la pleine lumière de la révolution américaine et l'aurore de la nôtre, — comme réveillés de leur longue torpeur, là-bas par le cliquetis des armes, chez nous, par le frémissement de la pensée philosophique. Et c'est pourquoi Franklin, s'il s'est conquis des droits à l'admiration universelle par ses travaux scientifiques et la solide morale de ses écrits, doit être honoré d'une affection particulière et comme filiale par les citoyens des deux pays libres. De même que dans sa patrie, Franklin méritait d'être glorifié à Paris, berceau de nos libertés, à Paris où cet illustre républicain vint abriter, pendant près de dix années, tout son cœur et tout son génie.

Lorsqu'en effet Franklin eut proclamé la déclaration d'indépendance et accepté la mission de venir concilier aux États-Unis l'appui de la France, c'est à Paris qu'il se rendit. Il se fixa à Passy, dans ces lieux que la fortune semble avoir favorisé entre tous, où tant d'hommes célèbres, depuis Molière et Boileau jusqu'à Béranger, Rossini, Alfred de Musset

et Victor Hugo, y ont pris rendez-vous, suivant l'expression de l'un deux, pour y goûter « l'ombre et le frais ». Il s'était installé dans un pavillon de l'hôtel de Valentinois sur lequel il devait construire le premier paratonnerre qu'il y eut en France et dont la situation merveilleuse, sur le chemin de Versailles, lui avait plu, dès sa première visite, infiniment. De la terrasse voisine, il avait, devant lui, la Seine et ses rives ombragées. Sa vue s'étendait jusqu'aux collines d'Issy, de Meudon et de Saint-Cloud, par-dessus la pointe de l'île des Cygnes, où le monument de Bartholdi rappelle aujourd'hui l'amitié traditionnelle qui unit la France et les États-Unis.

Franklin se présenta non comme un révolutionnaire, mais comme un sage. On le savait physicien de premier ordre. Simple, spirituel, il cachait la plus rare finesse sous une apparence de bonhomie patriarcale, et, quand ce vieil homme, comme il se dépeignait lui-même, se promenait au milieu des têtes poudrées de Paris, avec ses cheveux gris sortant d'un bonnet fourré, tout le monde le saluait avec respect. Au bout de peu de temps il était devenu aussi populaire à Paris qu'à Boston et à Philadelphie. Il était de mode d'avoir sur sa cheminée une gravure, un médaillon ou un buste de Franklin. Tous voulaient le voir et l'approcher. On organisait des fêtes en son honneur. Et Bachaumont raconte qu'à « un bal où il y avait beaucoup de jeunes et jolies femmes, toutes allèrent successivement lui rendre hommage et l'embrasser, malgré les grosses lunettes qu'il portait toujours sur son nez ».

Cependant, il restait d'une gaie sérénité et d'un commerce charmant. Il ne dépouilla jamais l'auteur

de « l'Almanach du bonhomme Richard ». Il inventait des apologues et citait des proverbes d'une grâce piquante. Il affectionnait les idées symboliques et il en eut une fort plaisante comme paroissien de Passy.

Bien que protestant, il voulut, un dimanche, offrir le pain bénit à l'Église, sous la forme de treize brioches qui représenteraient les treize colonies unies d'Amérique. Sur chacune d'elles devait être placée une banderole et, sur la première, une inscription portant le mot « Liberté ». Une objection d'ordre politique et d'ailleurs tout amicale, lui fit abandonner son projet : « Nous ne sommes qu'à trois lieues de Versailles, lui avait-on dit, ne serait-il pas inconvenant d'user d'un mot que là-bas on ne veut ni entendre ni connaître ? »

Avec cela, Franklin ne manquait pas de relever malicieusement quelques-uns de nos défauts. Ce qu'il avait remarqué, et ce qu'il ne pouvait comprendre, c'est la facilité avec laquelle, en France, on prodigue les recommandations en faveur des gens que, souvent, on connaît le moins. Il tournait doucement ce travers en ridicule dans une lettre-type qu'il appelait : « Modèle de recommandation pour une personne que l'on ne connaît pas ».

Je crois bien que le modèle n'en a jamais été perdu et que nous continuerons longtemps à le voir passer sous nos yeux — ou à nous en servir.

De Passy, Franklin, appuyé sur son bâton de pommier sauvage, s'en allait un peu partout. Sa promenade favorite était Auteuil. Il fréquentait le salon de la veuve d'Helvétius, où il rencontrait tout ce que le siècle comptait d'illustre dans les lettres ou

la philosophie : Turgot, dont le génie par plus d'un point, ressemblait au sien, d'Alembert et Diderot, qui jetaient aux quatre coins du pays, les feuillets libérateurs de l'Encyclopédie, et Condorcet, tout entier déjà à ses conceptions révolutionnaires pour lesquelles il devait mourir.

Souvent aussi Franklin se rendait à l'Académie des sciences. C'est là qu'il vit Voltaire, venu à Paris pour ses derniers triomphes. Les deux illustres vieillards s'embrassèrent au bruit des acclamations de l'assemblée. On dit alors que c'était Solon qui embrassait Sophocle. « C'était plutôt, remarque Mignet, le génie brillant et rénovateur de l'ancien monde qui embrassait le génie simple et entreprenant du nouveau. »

Tant de témoignages d'estime, si unanimes, si retentissants, devaient aider Franklin dans le succès de sa mission diplomatique. Le roi et la reine lui accordèrent audience à Versailles. Le vieillard en cheveux blancs, sans perruque, ayant à dessein négligé de se plier à l'étiquette, reçut un accueil digne de lui.

L'alliance de la France et des États-Unis avait été conclue. Son ambassade avait pleinement réussi. Il quitta la France, et, malgré son grand âge, traversa encore une fois l'Océan pour apporter à son pays le secours de son bon sens et de son expérience, accueilli, comme en triomphe, par tout un peuple reconnaissant.

Il y mourut. En France comme aux États-Unis, l'émotion fut très profonde. A la voix de Mirabeau, la Constituante décida de porter pendant trois jours le deuil du grand patriote. De tous côtés, furent

composés et imprimés des panégyriques en l'honneur de celui qui, disait-on, dans un langage dont la pompe emphatique exprimait mieux encore l'enthousiasme, « avait élevé l'étendard de la liberté sur les ruines du despotisme. »

Messieurs, il restait à traduire sous une autre forme encore, notre admiration pour le plus populaire peut-être des citoyens d'Amérique. Grâce à une pieuse initiative dont nous sommes grandement touchés, la France qu'il considérait comme sa seconde patrie et dont il disait : « Je l'aime et j'ai mille raisons de l'aimer ; son bonheur me touche comme ferait celui de ma mère même », la France aura maintenant la statue de Franklin. Elle se dressera sur cette voie qui portait déjà son nom, et dans ce quartier de Passy qui lui avait été si cher.

Nous la recevons avec reconnaissance, comme un nouveau gage de l'amitié des citoyens des États-Unis. Elle attestera toute la force de nos sympathies réciproques, de cette sympathie qui sait s'affirmer non seulement dans les jours heureux, mais à l'occasion de ces catastrophes qui viennent tout d'un coup désoler les peuples.

Nous veillerons sur ce beau monument, élevé à l'homme extraordinaire qui fut un ouvrier, un savant, le fondateur de l'indépendance de sa patrie, et un ami si fidèlement attaché à la France et à Paris!...

Genuine applause greeted these germane remarks.

A charming incident closed the ceremony. Unknown to all, even to the recipient of the honor, M. Barthou rose and on behalf of the French Government decorated Professor Smyth with the insignia of Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, and saluted him with the accolade, which Professor Smyth received with distinct surprise and becoming modesty.

While the Band played a Retreat, the audience, which had lingered around to exchange greetings and examine the exquisite statue, gradually melted away; but not before the professional and unprofessional photographer had done his wonted part.

Many of the guests found their way to the hospitable home of Mr. and Mrs. Harjes, where they could personally tender their congratulations on the success of the Fête, and wish them and theirs many years of continued happiness.

Beautifully placed upon a slope decorated with the artistic touch of the French landscape gardener, the statue has more than usual space about it and is altogether worthily framed. It presents to us the aged Benjamin Franklin, familiar to every schoolboy in the world, seated at ease in his arm-chair, and showing through his years that strength and dignity, that clear mental alertness which, added to sweet reasonableness, never forsook him. The statue is worthy of the place and the place of the statue. The pediment, the careful work of Mr. Charly Knight, a young American architect, is pure Louis XVI. in style, well upholds the statue, and accords with the position in which it stands. On the front of the pediment are quoted the memorable words of Mirabeau: "*Le génie qui affranchit l'Amérique et versa sur l'Europe des torrents de lumière. Le sage que deux mondes réclament*"; and above these words, and as if inspired by them, the American eagle, with appropriate emblems, takes its flight. On the sides of the pediment are bas-reliefs suggested by

Mr. Charly Knight and executed by M. Frederic Brou, showing the reception of Franklin by Louis XVI., in 1778, and the signature of the Peace of Paris, in 1783.

In his work M. Brou was much aided by M. P. de Nolhac, Conservateur du Musée de Versailles, who afforded him marked assistance and every facility to make an historically accurate presentation of the salons in which took place the two events delineated—even to furniture and decoration. This enabled M. Brou to do work absolutely authentic; and these bas-reliefs deserve study as fine examples of a difficult art. At the rear of the statue are read the words: "Offert à la Ville de Paris par John H. Harjes. 1906."

THEODORE AYRAULT DODGE.

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